DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 316 817 CG 022 368

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TITLE Elementary School Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention OREA Report.
INSTITUTION New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn, NY. Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.
PUB DATE Nov 89
NOTE 43p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attendance; *Dropout Prevention; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; Family School Relationship; *High Risk Students; Outreach Programs; *Program Effectiveness; School Counseling

ABSTRACT

The Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention program (A.I.D.P.) is a state-funded, multi-faceted program designed to provide services to students considered to be at risk of dropping out of school. The elementary school A.I.D.P. program is comprised of six components: facilitation, attendance outreach, guidance, health, school-level linkage, and extended school day and is modeled on the middle school A.I.D.P. program. The implementation of the A.I.D.P. in five schools was reviewed. The evaluation results indicated that all five programs shared certain features. Each program emphasized individual attention to students, and consistent outreach and guidance and counseling services, including phone calls or letters to parents, home visits, and parent conferences. Generally, elementary school A.I.D.P. programs were successful at reaching parents when an outreach attempt was made, though success rates varied from school to school, depending on the outreach method used. Students in the program tended to improve their attendance, improve or maintain academic achievement levels, and pass to the next highest class at the end of the school year. A small number continued to have trouble passing all their subjects. The findings suggest that the programs should continue and staffing should increase. (ABL)

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OREA Report

Elementary School Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention Program 1987-1988

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EVALUATION SECTION REPORT
John E. Schoener, Chief Administrator

November 1989

Elementary School Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention Program 1987-1988

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5/22/89

SUMMARY

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention program (A.I.D.P.) is a state-funded, multi-faceted program designed to provide services to students considered to be at risk of dropping out of school. The elementary school A.I.D.P. program is comprised of six components--facilitation, attendance outreach, guidance, health, school-level linkage, and extended school day--and is modeled on the middle school A.I.D.P. program; it is administered by the community school districts (C.S.D.s).

The elementary school A.I.D.P. program began in 1986-87, when a sum of $90,000 was made available by the New York State Education Department (S.E.D.) for a pilot A.I.D.P. program in three elementary schools. In fall 1987, these same three schools received increased funding from S.E.D. for an expanded program during the 1987-88 school year. In addition, Chancellor's Special Circular #37, Tentative Guidelines for 1987-88 School-based Dropout Prevention Program in the New York City Public School System, gave C.S.D.s the option of using a portion of their middle school A.I.D.P. funds for A.I.D.P. programs in attendance-eligible elementary schools, provided that the following conditions were met: 1) there was no adverse programmatic impact on the middle school(s); 2) participating elementary school students received all six mandated program components; and 3) the Office of Student Progress approved the plan in advance of operation.

In 1987-88, six districts planned to implement an elementary school A.I.D.P. program in a total of 14 schools. However, because the funding for all but the three aforementioned programs came out of the districts' middle school A.I.D.P. budget, some programs were never implemented and many did not begin until spring 1988 because the districts had to be certain that there would be enough funding available to meet the needs of the elementary school programs. Only two schools received funding from their respective districts early enough in the year to begin their programs in fall 1987. Thus, five schools in all--the two funded by their districts and the three funded directly by S.E.D.--were able to implement their A.I.D.P. program in fall 1987. These five programs served a total of 415 students, and provided the basis for the evaluation of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program conducted by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA). Those programs that began too late to provide more than a few months of service to A.I.D.P.-eligible students were not included in this year's evaluation.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

OREA staff reviewed centrally collected attendance and achievement data for A.I.D.P. program students in the five schools that started their A.I.D.P. program in fall 1987. OREA staff also surveyed A.I.D.P. facilitators, family outreach workers, and school principals in these schools, reviewed program and school records, and analyzed data from Monthly Summary of Service Reports (M.S.S.R.s) prepared by program staff in order to obtain information regarding program implementation.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Chancellor's Special Circular #37 established criteria to be used in assessing the success of all the A.I.D.P. programs. Though not all the criteria were relevant to the elementary school program, the following criteria were applicable:

1. A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will have 1987-88 attendance that is better than in 1986-87.

2. A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will pass at least one more subject in 1987-88 than they did in 1986-87. (This applies only to participating students who failed one or more subjects during the previous year.)

3. A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will be promoted to the next highest grade at the end of the school year.*

MAJOR FINDINGS

Implementation

Though the schools differed in the way they implemented their A.I.D.P. program, all five programs shared certain features. Each program emphasized individual attention to students, and consistent attendance outreach and guidance and counseling services, including phone calls or letters to parents, home visits, and parent conferences. Generally, elementary school A.I.D.P. programs were successful at reaching parents when an outreach attempt was made, though success rates varied from school to school, depending on the outreach method used. In March 1988, phone calls resulted in parent contact 75 percent of

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*No promotional criterion was set specifically for elementary school students. This criterion was set for middle school students and was applied to elementary school students for the purposes of this report.

the time and home visits resulted in parent contact 68 percent of the time.

Outcomes

Students in the elementary school A.I.D.P. program met and surpassed both the attendance and promotion criteria set by the Chancellor; i.e.,

- 69.3 percent of the elementary school A.I.D.P. students had better attendance in 1987-88 than they did in 1986-87 and
- 93 percent of the elementary school A.I.D.P. students were promoted to the next highest grade at the end of the school year.

In addition,

- By spring 1988, mean reading scores of elementary school A.I.D.P. students in the third and fourth grades were near or above the national average for grade, while those of fifth and sixth grade students were slightly above average for grade.
- Mean mathematics scores of elementary school A.I.D.P. students were at or above average for their respective grades, except for the mean score of sixth grade students, which was slightly below average for grade.

Nevertheless, elementary school A.I.D.P. students did not meet the Chancellor's course pass-rate criterion:

- Of the 123 (30 percent) elementary school students who had failed at least one subject in 1986-87, only 27.6 percent passed an additional subject in 1987-88.

It should be noted, however, that despite improved attendance in 1987-88, students who failed one or more courses in both 1986-87 and 1987-88 had significantly lower reading and mathematics scores in 1987-88 than the elementary school A.I.D.P. population at large, suggesting a need for additional remedial programs for these students.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The elementary school A.I.D.P. program was successfully implemented in the five schools that were funded in time to begin their program in fall 1987. These programs were particularly successful in providing attendance outreach and individual student contacts, and were able to reach parents with commendable frequency. Students in the program tended to improve their attendance, improve or maintain academic achievement levels, and

pass to the next highest class at the end of the school year. Despite this, a small number of students (89) continue to have trouble passing all of their subjects.

These findings suggest that:

- Every effort should be made to fund elementary school A.I.D.P. programs so that they can be in place in the fall.
- Special attention should be given to students with reading or mathematics scores that are well below average. These students are at risk of failing subjects, and appear to need additional remedial services.
- Appropriate and timely training for facilitators and family assistants in areas including, but not limited to, parent guidance, techniques for increasing parent participation, and working with resistant parents should be provided.
- An additional family assistant should be appointed so that family assistants making home visits in dangerous areas of the city can work in teams for reasons of personal safety.
- Since a facilitator who has teaching responsibilities is not always available to assist A.I.D.P. students and/or their parents, and since the services to be provided via the guidance component of the program are extensive, the positions of facilitator and guidance counselor should be made full-time.
- An extended school-day program should be a mandatory component of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program.

Finally, one facilitator made a suggestion that bears consideration as a seventh A.I.D.P. program component. Noting that "where there are at-risk children, there are at-risk parents," this facilitator felt that a parent education component including English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) classes, General Education Development (G.E.D.) classes, and occupational training activities would further increase the likelihood that elementary school students would continue to attend school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the individuals involved in the elementary school A.I.D.P. program, including Office of Student Progress personnel, A.I.D.P. district coordinators, elementary school facilitators, family workers, guidance personnel, and school principals, who generously gave of their time and ideas.

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I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In October 1986, in response to recommendations from middle school A.I.D.P. personnel and at the urging of the Office of Student Progress (O.S.P.), the sum of $90,000 was made available by the New York State Education Department (S.E.D.) for a pilot A.I.D.P. program in three elementary schools. The Office of Educational Assessment (O.E.A.), hereafter referred to as the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA), evaluated this program and found that it was successful in improving the attendance of participating students.* In fall 1987, these same three schools received increased funding from S.E.D. for an expanded A.I.D.P. program during the 1987-88 school year. In addition, Chancellor's Special Circular #37, Tentative Guidelines for 1987-88 School-based Dropout Prevention Program in the New York City Public School System, gave community school districts the option of using a portion of their middle school A.I.D.P. funds for A.I.D.P. programs in attendance-eligible elementary schools, provided that the following conditions were met: 1) there was no adverse programmatic impact on the middle school(s); 2) the participating elementary school students received all six mandated program components; and 3) the Office of Student Progress approved the plan in advance of operation.

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*Copies of the report titled Elementary School Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) Pilot Program 1986-87 are available from the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.

Six districts planned to implement an elementary school A.I.D.P. program in a total of 14 schools in 1987-88. However, because the funding for all but the three existing programs came out of districts' middle school A.I.D.P. budget, many of these programs did not begin until spring 1988, because the districts had to be certain that there would be enough funding available to meet the needs of the elementary school programs. Only two schools received funding from their respective districts early enough in the year to begin their programs in fall 1987; thus, only five schools (the two funded by their districts and the three funded directly by S.E.D.) were able to implement their A.I.D.P. program in fall 1987.

This report presents an evaluation of the 1987-88 A.I.D.P. program in these five elementary schools. Only full-year programs were evaluated because OREA evaluators felt that a program has the most impact if it is in place for a full school year. This report focuses on how the program was implemented in 1987-88, including changes made in the program from the previous year, the effects of the program on students' attendance and achievement, and the role of parents in improving the attendance of elementary school students. It should be stated at the outset that although all five programs were funded in time to be fully operational in fall 1987, one program was not fully implemented until much later in the year because of delays in both staffing and training. This will be noted, where appropriate, throughout the report.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

OREA gathered information for this report from several sources. First, OREA evaluators interviewed O.S.P. personnel who provided an overview of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program with a special focus on how the program was structured and staffed. In order to collect information on implementation and start-up times, OREA staff examined site-visit reports completed in January and February 1988 by staff from O.S.P., who monitored the A.I.D.P. program and provided technical support to program personnel. An OREA field evaluator made visits to each of the five A.I.D.P. elementary schools, to interview program personnel and review selected records maintained by them. Finally, OREA analyzed attendance, achievement, and service delivery data provided by O.S.P.; the data were based on the documentation O.S.P. received from the schools.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Chancellor's Special Circular #37 established criteria to be addressed in assessing the success of the A.I.D.P. program. Though not all the criteria specified in the circular were relevant to the elementary school A.I.D.P. program, the following criteria did apply:

1. A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will have 1987-88 attendance that is better than in 1986-87.

2. A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will pass at least one more subject in 1987-88 than they did in 1986-87. (This

applies only to participating students who failed one or more subjects during the previous year.)

3. A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will be promoted to the next highest grade at the end of the school year.*

SCHOOL AND STUDENT SELECTION PROCEDURES

School Selection

As mentioned earlier, elementary schools were selected for participation in the A.I.D.P. program in two ways. First, schools that had participated in the 1986-87 elementary school A.I.D.P. pilot program were funded by the S.E.D. for another year. Second, districts could choose to use a portion of their middle school A.I.D.P. funds for A.I.D.P. programs in elementary schools, as long as this diversion of funds had no ill effects on the middle school A.I.D.P. program, and funding was sufficient to provide elementary school students with all of the mandated program components. Any elementary school so chosen had to satisfy the state's attendance criterion (an attendance rate at or below the citywide elementary school median) and feed into a middle school that had an A.I.D.P. program.

In all, six districts chose 14 elementary schools in which to implement A.I.D.P. programs. Nine of these programs commenced in spring 1988, for the reasons noted previously.

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*No promotional criterion was set specifically for elementary school students. This criterion was set for middle school students and was applied to elementary school students for the purposes of this report.

Student Selection

Each elementary school was to choose 75 children to participate in the A.I.D.P. program. Students one or two years away from entrance into middle school were selected for participation in this year's program. Students in lower grades were selected if space was available. Since there were no specific guidelines for selecting elementary school students, districts varied slightly in terms of the criteria used. However, the elementary schools studied in this report used the following eligibility criteria as delineated in Chancellor's Special Circular #37 with only minor variations:

1. 30-74 days absent in the 1986-87 school year;
2. 15 absences or more during spring 1987; and
3. 25-29 absences and one of the following high risk indicators during the 1986-87 school year:
   a) reading 1 or more years below grade level;
   b) 2 or more major subject failures;
   c) 20 or more latenesses;
   d) 20 or more 1/2 day absences;
   e) overage for grade;
   f) limited English proficiency (LEP) entitlement.

In all, there were 415 A.I.D.P. program participants in the five schools studied in this evaluation report, with each school serving an average of 83 students at some point during the school year. Because some students entered or left the program mid-year, the programs differed as to the number of students served at any given time. At the time of the site visits in spring 1988, the number of A.I.D.P. participants in each school ranged

from 66 to 82. Most of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program students (63.7 percent) were evenly distributed between the fourth and fifth grades. Fifteen percent were in sixth grade, eleven percent were in third grade, and a small number (5.7 percent) were in second grade. Slightly over half of the participants were girls (54.9 percent). Finally, 4.7 percent of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program students were in special education classes, and another 15.7 percent were designated as limited English proficient (LEP) and therefore eligible for bilingual educational services.

Of the 415 students surveyed in this report, 74.7 percent were chosen for program participation on the basis of excessive absences in the previous year. Eleven percent of the elementary school A.I.D.P. students attended school more frequently, but were selected because they demonstrated at least two characteristics associated with students at risk of dropping out of school. These characteristics include low reading scores, excessive lateness, LEP entitlement, overage for grade, etc. Table 1 gives a detailed breakdown of the criteria by which students were selected for participation in the program. It should be noted, however, that the selection criteria were to be applied in order of presentation. Hence, a student who was absent 30-74 days during 1986-87 and reading one or more years below grade level would be selected for the program on the basis of the absences, and would not be included in Table 1 data as reading below grade level.

Table 1

Selection Criteria for
Elementary School A.I.D.P. Program Students 1987-88

Selection Criteria	N	Percent
30 to 74 absences in 1986-87	240	57.8
15 absences or more during spring 1987	70	16.9
25 to 29 absences in 1986-87 and participant in the 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program	10	2.4
25 to 29 absences in 1986-87 and 1987 D.R.P. score at or below the 35th percentile	3	.7
25 to 29 absences in 1986-87 and failure in two or more major subjects in June 1987	1	.2
25 to 29 absences in 1986-87 and LEP entitled	1	.2
22 to 25 absences in 1986-87 and participant in the 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program	13	3.1
Student does not meet absence criteria above, but was chosen because of two of the following: a) reading 1 or more years below grade level; b) 2 or more major subject failures; c) living in temporary housing; d) 20 or more latenesses; e) 20 or more 1/2 day absences; f) overage for grade; g) limited English proficient (LEP) services entitled.	47	11.3
Absent 10 or more days between September and October 31, 1987, but not a Long Term Absentee (L.T.A.)	4	1.0
15 to 37 absences from September, 1987 to January 1988	8	1.9
Participated in 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program	1	.2
Other school-based data	17	4.1
	415	99.8

•Three-quarters of the elementary school A.I.D.P. students were chosen to participate in the program on the basis of excessive absence in the prior year.

II. PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND IMPLEMENTATION

The 1987-88 A.I.D.P. elementary school program was to include six components that were similar, though not identical, to last year's A.I.D.P. configuration. (OREA's evaluation of the 1986-87 pilot project describes the components of the 1986-87 program.) As in the previous year, the 1987-88 elementary school program design was a collaborative effort by O.S.P. staff and district-level personnel; this year it was modified to reflect the recommendations made by program staff in 1986-87. The six components of the 1987-88 program were facilitation, attendance outreach, guidance, health, school-level linkages, and extended school day. Changes from the 1986-87 program included additional program-dedicated time for the facilitator, funding for a Pupil Personnel Committee, and a revised guidance component. The re-entry and transitional services component, which had been found to be superfluous last year, was replaced by an extended school day program, which had functioned last year as the primary guidance activity. A brief description of the six program components and how they were implemented in the participating schools follows.

FACILITATION

This component included a facilitator who would administer the program and maintain records. This year, the facilitator was allotted two periods per day for facilitation, as compared to one period the previous year. This gave the

facilitator more flexibility to act as a liaison between the school staff and program personnel, and to meet with students and parents. Four out of the five facilitators were in place as of September and the fifth was in place by December 1987.

This year, the facilitation component also included a Pupil Personnel Committee (P.P.C.) comprised of program personnel, one or more members of the school administrative staff and other relevant school or district-level staff members included at the discretion of the facilitator. The P.P.C. was to meet every two weeks, thus providing personnel working with A.I.D.P. students with a forum for discussing common problems, concerns, and strategies.

The P.P.C.s in the five schools operated in different ways. The P.P.C. met twice a month in three schools and once a month in one school. In the fifth school, the P.P.C. did not meet until March 1988 and did not meet again for two months.

In the three schools that had piloted the A.I.D.P. program last year, the members of the P.P.C. included the A.I.D.P. team--facilitator, family assistant, extended school day teachers, and guidance counselor, and either the principal or assistant principal of the school. The guidance counselor, whose time was divided among the three schools, attended their P.P.C. meetings on a rotating basis. In two of three schools, regular classroom teachers were asked to attend P.P.C. meetings on an ad-hoc basis, at the discretion of the facilitator.

The facilitators at the two schools that were not pilot

schools last year mentioned that they received little guidance as to how to set up the P.P.C. Hence, the members of the P.P.C. varied at the discretion of the facilitators, though the A.I.D.P. team and a school administrator were always present. In one school, the facilitator was able to enlist the help of guidance counselors, social workers, and staff members from other programs whose input he felt would be useful, though they were not otherwise connected to the A.I.D.P. program in that school. According to site visit reports prepared by O.S.P. staff, the program facilitator at the school which did not have a P.P.C. meeting until March received technical assistance regarding the P.P.C. at the time of the site visit in February 1988. The A.I.D.P. team, the district coordinator of the A.I.D.P. program, a classroom teacher from each of the grades in which there were A.I.D.P. program students, and the assistant principal attended the initial P.P.C. meeting at this school.

Except at this school, whose program facilitator reserved judgment until the following year, facilitators reported that the P.P.C. was a very helpful forum for coordinating the efforts of the team and generating ideas and strategies for dealing with program students. Facilitators further underscored its importance for dealing with difficult cases, coordinating referrals, and enhancing staff awareness of the options available to their students.

While the facilitation component was generally well implemented, the two facilitators who were new to the A.I.D.P.

program felt that they had to learn their role "on the job" and that this made for less effective programming early in the year. Both explained that the orientation they attended had been designed for middle school facilitators who were familiar with the A.I.D.P. program and, hence, was not appropriate to their needs. While both facilitators praised a training workshop they attended for elementary school facilitators and family workers, they felt that it was held too late in the year to be of much assistance in current program planning.

ATTENDANCE OUTREACH

The attendance outreach component included the services of a full-time family assistant who was responsible for most attendance record-keeping and outreach services. The family assistant was responsible for virtually all home contacts, including written notification to parents regarding student absence, wake-up calls, and home visits. In addition, a school aide position was funded for two periods per day to assist the facilitator and family assistant with home contacts (excluding home visits) and clerical work. The attendance outreach component also included attendance incentives to encourage and reward good attendance by students. Non-A.I.D.P. students (up to 20 percent) could be involved in attendance incentive activities, in order to serve as peer role models.

In general, this component was well implemented in all five schools. Ninety-nine percent of all elementary school A.I.D.P. students received at least one outreach service, and 59 percent

received three or four outreach services. Table 2 details the attendance services provided to the elementary school A.I.D.P. students.

The procedure for determining outreach strategies was similar in all the schools. Absences were recorded in each class, either by the classroom teacher or by a member of the A.I.D.P. team, and post cards were sent out or phone calls made to the parents of absent children. After two consecutive, unexplained absences, the family worker made a home visit. In March 1988 alone, each program site averaged 59 home visits, ranging from 12 to 90, and 136 phone calls to parents, ranging from 29 to 199.

The schools' success rate in contacting parents through these outreach services varied. Again using March as a typical month, one school had a 100 percent success rate in reaching parents by phone ("We get <u>everybody</u>," the facilitator stated). Another school rarely used the phone, choosing instead to send postcards, because too few parents had telephones. Similarly, making home visits resulted in parent contact 90 percent of the time in one school and 42 percent of the time in another school. Tallied across all five schools, phone calls resulted in parent contact 75 percent of the time and home visits resulted in parent contact 68 percent of the time. This finding demonstrates the success with which the A.I.D.P. team reached the parents of the elementary school A.I.D.P. students; over 60 percent of these parents had person-to-person contact with a member of the

Table 2

Attendance Outreach Services Provided to
Elementary School A.I.D.P. Students in 1987-88
(N=415)

Services	n*	(%)	Average number of times each student received service
All Attendance Outreach Services	411	(99.0)	---
Mail Contact	353	(85.1)	9.2
Telephone Contact	335	(80.7)	9.3
Home Visit	335	(80.7)	5.0
Attendance Incentives	278	(67.0)	4.3

Percentage totals exceed 100 percent as students were able to receive more than one attendance outreach service.

*n=number of students who received service.

- Virtually every elementary school A.I.D.P. student received attendance outreach services on a frequent basis.

A.I.D.P. staff this year.

This finding also highlights the pivotal role played by the family assistants, who often made the phone calls and virtually always made the home visits. While all of these family assistants felt that the supervision they received from the facilitator or the district coordinator was very helpful, each mentioned the need for training in the areas of parent guidance and techniques for working with resistant parents. Furthermore, given the dangerous neighborhoods in which the family assistants often worked, several mentioned the need for an additional staff member to accompany them on home visits.

Attendance incentive programs varied at each of the schools, though they shared common elements. The criteria by which students merited awards were clear and, in all but one case, students were easily able to monitor their own progress. The single exception was a school in which it was difficult for students to leave their classrooms and which had not yet devised a plan by which students could have easy access to the A.I.D.P. team. Generally, attendance incentive programs involved token economies, with points or "currency" given for attendance and, in some cases, for academic achievement and participation in the extended school day program. In some schools, tokens could be handed in at any time in exchange for small prizes or school supplies. In other programs, points were tallied and prizes awarded on a monthly basis. Students who attained certain criteria were also eligible to participate in parties and trips

arranged by the program facilitator. These activities could also include a small number of non-A.I.D.P. students.

Most A.I.D.P. staff felt that attendance incentives were particularly successful with the elementary school A.I.D.P. participants. However, several staff members complained that the schools often had to pay well in advance for program materials or trips and then had to wait to be reimbursed by the district offices.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES

The guidance and counseling component of the program changed markedly from the previous year. The current program's guidance component was comprised of two elements: an array of counseling services provided by a guidance counselor, and parent involvement workshops. The guidance counselor was required to provide group and individual counseling to targeted students and their families; make and monitor referrals to outside agencies; discuss students' needs with A.I.D.P. staff and instructional personnel; and maintain regular communication with parents of targeted students in order to strengthen the liaison between students' homes and school. In addition, the facilitator, in conjunction with the P.P.C., was to develop four parent involvement activities (e.g., workshops, presentations, lectures, etc.). Funding was to be provided for a workshop/activity leader for four two-hour sessions.

This program component was well implemented, though the provision of guidance services varied in the five schools under

review. Overall, 75 percent of the elementary school A.I.D.P. students received at least one guidance service during the year. Table 3 presents a breakdown of the number of students receiving each service and the average frequency with which they received it.

The three schools that had been A.I.D.P. pilot schools in 1986-87 were in one district and planned to share the services of a full-time A.I.D.P. guidance counselor. However, difficulties in staffing procedures prevented this guidance counselor, who was chosen by the A.I.D.P. district coordinator, from being assigned to the program until February 1988. At that time, the guidance counselor's activities were planned out, and each facilitator received a copy of the counselor's schedule. In conjunction with the facilitator and family worker in each school, the guidance counselor targeted students most in need of counseling services. In addition, students could make appointments with the guidance counselor on their own. The guidance counselor was responsible for referrals to outside agencies and acted as the primary liaison between the school and these agencies. The guidance counselor also attended parent workshops and P.P.C. meetings.

In the other two schools, the facilitators--one of whom was a dean and one of whom was a guidance counselor--provided counseling services. In one of these schools the facilitator attempted to see each program participant twice per month, once individually and once in a group. Group sessions revolved around specific prepared activities (e.g. peer relationships, self-

Table 3

Guidance Services Provided to
Elementary School A.I.D.P. Program Students in 1987-88
(N=415)

Services	n*	(%)	Average number of times student received service
All Guidance Services	315	(75.9)	---
School Student Conference	245	(59.0)	2.7
Individual Student Guidance Session	242	(58.3)	4.3
Group Guidance Session	251	(60.5)	5.5
School Parent Conference	159	(38.3)	2.3
Parent Guidance Session	120	(28.9)	1.8

Percentage totals exceed 100 percent as students were able to receive more than one guidance service.

*n= number of students who received service.

- Three-quarters of the elementary school A.I.D.P. students participated in a guidance activity at some point during the school year.

esteem, etc.). When necessary, this facilitator made referrals to a district-based special education guidance counselor or to outside agencies. In the other school, the facilitator, who was a licensed guidance counselor, counseled children and, when necessary, referred them to the school guidance counselor or the social worker from an outside agency who worked in the school. This facilitator, the school guidance counselor, and the social worker worked as a team to coordinate the guidance and counseling component for the A.I.D.P. program at this school.

By the time of the OREA site visits in late May 1988, each of the five schools had held at least one parent workshop, with two schools having held two, one school having held four, and one school having held five. Not all of these activities were solely for A.I.D.P. participants' parents, though each of the workshops was geared towards them. The number of parents of A.I.D.P. participants who attended these workshops ranged from three to 35, with an average of 19. Topics discussed at these workshops included orientation to the A.I.D.P. program, the effect of attendance on academic progress and achievement test scores, strategies for parents to improve their child's attendance, alternatives to special education, criteria for passing reading and mathematics tests, drug-abuse prevention, and job opportunities for parents.

Four of the five facilitators felt that the A.I.D.P. program had improved parents' involvement in their children's education. (One facilitator, whose program commenced later than the rest,

reserved judgment until the following year.) According to two facilitators, parents appreciated the availability of the A.I.D.P. team when they had questions or concerns about their children, or needed assistance obtaining services from different social service programs. Three facilitators mentioned that parents were responsive to the positive reinforcement they and their children received for improved attendance, and were more likely to call the school if their child were absent so that the child would not be penalized for the absence. One facilitator mentioned that some parents were more diligent about sending their children to school in order to avoid being targeted for a home visit.

HEALTH SERVICES

This component remained unchanged from last year. District- and school-based Board of Education and Department of Health personnel were responsible for developing and implementing a health plan that would include health record reviews, vision and hearing screenings, physicals, referrals for health care, and documentation of service delivery.

The implementation of the health component varied in each school depending on the number and type of health professionals working in the school, and the number of days each worked per week. In two schools, students' health records were reviewed by non-medical personnel--either the facilitator or the classroom teacher--with referrals made for physicals or dental appointments either to on-site staff or local clinics. In the other three

schools, record reviews were made by a combination of medical and non-medical personnel, or by the school nurse alone. According to the site visit reports filed by O.S.P. personnel, some A.I.D.P. facilitators had difficulty in enlisting the assistance of the health professional at their school in completing record reviews in a timely manner and recording services rendered in a useful manner. Referrals for medical services were made on an ad-hoc basis at all five schools. In four of the five schools, follow-up was left to medical personnel. In one school, the facilitator asked parents to send a note when their child's medical appointment was kept.

SCHOOL-LEVEL LINKAGE

This component also remained unchanged from the previous year. In order to introduce the targeted elementary school students (specifically, fifth and sixth grade students) to the middle schools they were likely to attend, facilitators were required to arrange for them to visit middle schools and participate in their extracurricular activities. Facilitators were also responsible for coordinating parent/student orientation meetings.

Again, implementation of this component varied by school. The three schools that had been pilot schools last year repeated a comprehensive linkage component that had been developed the previous year. First, A.I.D.P. students from all three elementary schools visited the middle school to which they were linked. There they received an orientation to the school, met

the middle school A.I.D.P. staff, and toured the extended school day program. Later, participants from each school went to the middle school and each student chose an extended school day activity in which to participate.

At one of the schools new to the A.I.D.P. program, students also visited the middle school to which they were linked. There they heard the principal speak and saw a show at a student assembly. In addition, the guidance counselor from the middle school visited the elementary school. In the other school which was introducing the A.I.D.P. program for the first time, the linkage program was not administered by the A.I.D.P. facilitator. This school had an existing policy for all fifth grade students to visit the local middle school, under the supervision of the school guidance counselor. A.I.D.P. participants in lower grades did not participate in the linkage program at this site.

Finally, one facilitator reported holding a parent workshop regarding the linkage program. This facilitator felt that the workshop was an important factor in dispelling the negative image that the middle school had in the community.

EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY

In 1986-87, the guidance component of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program included teacher-mentors who met with targeted students either before or after school to provide academic and emotional support. While most of the program staff felt that mentor activities were effective in improving student attendance and academic performance, very few felt that these activities

ought to be part of the guidance component. In 1987-88, the teacher-mentor activities fell under the rubric of the extended school day component. This was an optional component in which up to two teachers were to provide remedial, enrichment and/or recreational activities to targeted students for a period of two hours, three times each week. Schools were to conduct a needs assessment since funding would only be available for this component if 15 students per teacher were found to be in need of extended school day services; an average of 12 students attending each session would ensure continued funding.

All five A.I.D.P. programs had extended school day programs, though only three were coordinated by A.I.D.P. staff. All five programs included tutorial and recreational activities. One program also included "rap" sessions, in which students discussed issues of concern to them, and another included music lessons and academic enrichment activities. At one site, the extended school day program was run by the local police precinct, with the assistance of two classroom teachers.

Though the facilitators' descriptions of the content of these programs varied little, facilitators were divided as to how useful the extended school day program was in improving the attendance and academic achievement of the A.I.D.P. program participants. The facilitators from the three schools in their second year of program implementation were very enthusiastic about their extended school day programs, and thought that the students also felt that the program was helpful to them.

Notably, these three facilitators were also extended school day teachers and the extended school day activities were under the auspices of the A.I.D.P. program. Over half the A.I.D.P. program students in these schools participated in this component of the program. However, the facilitator at one of the sites new to the progam felt that the extended school day program was only moderately effective, because many parents wanted their children home after school. Very few A.I.D.P. program participants attended the after-school program at this site. Another facilitator, who was implementing the A.I.D.P. program for the first time, felt that students did not make the connection between the extended school day program and any academic benefits they might receive from attending it. Nevertheless, 24 students attended the program at this school. Across all five schools, 128 elementary school A.I.D.P. program students attended extended school day programs.

III. FINDINGS

Students in the elementary school A.I.D.P. program not only met but surpassed the attendance and promotional criteria set by the Chancellor. Across all five schools, 69.3 percent of the A.I.D.P. program participants had better attendance in 1987-88 than they did in 1986-87. At least 50 percent of the students in each of the five programs increased their attendance level from 1986-87 to 1987-88; in one school, 90 percent of the A.I.D.P. program students increased their attendance level. The average attendance rate of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program students went from 81.8 in 1986-87 to 85.1 in 1987-88. These results are summarized in Table 4.

Ninety-three percent of the elementary school A.I.D.P. students were promoted to the next highest grade at the end of the school year. This far surpasses the 50 percent criterion suggested by the Chancellor's middle school guidelines, which were adapted to elementary schools for the purposes of this report.

Students in the elementary school A.I.D.P. program did not meet the criterion stipulating that 50 percent of those students who had failed one or more subjects in 1986-87 would pass an additional subject in 1987-88. Over one-third (165 students) of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program students failed one or more subjects in 1986-87. Of these, 27.6 percent passed an

TABLE 4

Attendance Outcomes for 1987-88 Elementary School A.I.D.P. Program Students

School	(N)*	1986-87 Attendance	1987-88 Attendance	Percent of Students with Improved Attendance from 1986-87 to 1987-88
1	(66)	81.2	81.9	59.1
2	(57)	86.5	87.1	62.6
3	(76)	83.6	87.0	65.7
4	(83)	81.1	88.9	90.4
5	(76)	77.7	80.3	71.1
All Students	(358)	81.8	85.1	69.3

*N=number of students for whom there are complete attendance data from 1986-87 and 1987-88.

- Over two-thirds of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program students improved their attendance from 1986-87 to 1987-88, surpassing the 50 percent criterion stipulated in the Chancellor's guidelines.

additional subject in 1987-88, which was well under the 50 percent criterion stipulated by the Chancellor. However, other measures of academic achievement indicate that, as a group, the elementary school A.I.D.P. students made good progress in 1987-88. By spring 1988, average mid-instructional level scores on the Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.) test for students in grades three through six were near or above grade level. (The D.R.P. does not extend to the second grade.) Furthermore, average increases in the students' D.R.P. scores from the previous year were at or above the increase that would be expected over a year's time, suggesting that many students made more than a year's progress in one year. Generally, the average scaled scores on the mathematics portion of the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) for the elementary school A.I.D.P. students were at or above average for their respective grades. The sixth grade students' average score was slightly below average for their grade. Table 5 summarizes these findings.

Insofar as their achievement scores suggest that the elementary school A.I.D.P. students, as a group, should be able to pass their subjects, OREA analysts examined the achievement scores for students who had failed at least one subject in both 1986-87 and in 1987-88. Most of these students (79 percent) were in the fourth or fifth grade in 1987-88; the remaining 21 percent were divided among the second, third, and sixth grades in numbers too small for statistical analysis. As can be seen in Table 6, fourth or fifth grade students in this group had

TABLE 5

Achievement Outcomes for Elementary School
A.I.D.P. Program Students from 1986-87 to 1987-88

Achievement Tests	Grade in 1987-88 Two	Three	Four	Five	Six
Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.) (n=308)*					
Mean D.R.P. mid-instructional level score, spring 1987	--	19.7	31.4	36.7	44.6
Mean D.R.P. mid-instructional level score, spring 1988	--	29.9	37.5	49.7	54.8
National average D.R.P. mid-instructional level score for grade	--	33.0	39.0	46.0	52.3
Metropolitan Achievement Test-Mathematics (MAT) (n=344)*					
Mean MAT scale score, spring 1987	550	564	575	599	612
Mean MAT math scale score, spring 1988	559	590	602	627	635
National average MAT scale score for grade	541	579	600	624	639

*n=number of students for whom there are complete data for 1986-87 and 1987-88.

- Elementary school A.I.D.P. students made significant gains in reading in 1987-88. While third and fourth grade students were still reading slightly below average for their respective grades, fifth and sixth grade students were reading slightly above average for grade.

- Elementary school A.I.D.P. students made significant gains in mathematics. Students in all but the sixth grade were performing above average for their grade.

TABLE 6

Achievement Outcomes for Fourth and Fifth Grade A.I.D.P. Students Who Failed at Least one Subject in 1986-87 and 1987-88

Achievement Tests	Grade in 1987-88 Four (n=53)	Five (n=50)
Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.) (n=95)*		
Mean D.R.P. mid-instructional level score, spring 1987	24.9	28.5
Mean D.R.P. mid-instructional level score, spring 1988	32.4	43.3
National average D.R.P. mid-instructional level score for grade	39.0	46.0
Metropolitan Achievement Test-Mathematics (MAT) (n=92)*		
Mean MAT math scale score, spring 1987	556	581
Mean MAT mathematics scale score, spring 1988	592	611
National average MAT scale score for grade	600	624

*n=number of students for whom there are complete data for 1986-87 and 1987-88.

•Elementary school A.I.D.P. students who failed one or more subjects for two consecutive years have reading and mathematics scores below average for their respective grades, and below those of the elementary school A.I.D.P. population as a whole.

lower D.R.P. mid-instructional level scores and lower MAT scores than did elementary school A.I.D.P. students as a whole. Moreover, 24.6 percent of all the students who failed at least one subject for two consecutive years were LEP-entitled, a greater proportion than in the elementary school A.I.D.P. population as a whole (15.7 percent).

The circular relationship between poor attendance and poor academic achievement has been reported in earlier evaluations of the middle school A.I.D.P. program.* It should be noted, however, that the 1987-88 attendance rate of the elementary school students who had failed at least one subject for two consecutive years was 86.3, slightly higher than that of the elementary school A.I.D.P. students overall. This finding suggests that while the A.I.D.P. program is successful in improving the attendance of poor achievers, attendance improvement alone does not guarantee improved academic performance, and that more remedial attention needs to be given to students with low test scores, especially if they have demonstrated subject failure. While each of the five schools had procedures in place for providing remedial education services for their students, these procedures and programs were not under the auspices of the A.I.D.P. program.

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*The Middle School Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention (A.I.D..) Program 1985-86 End-Of-Year Report and the Middle School Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) Program 1986-87 are available from the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The elementary school A.I.D.P. program works. Over two-thirds of the participating students improved their attendance. Furthermore, overall, elementary school A.I.D.P. students made good academic progress, with 1987-88 reading and mathematics achievement scores that were near or above average for their grade, and with 93 percent being promoted to the next grade at the end of the school year. Unfortunately, students whose test scores were low and who had experienced subject failure in 1986-87 did not perform much better in 1987-88. However, the A.I.D.P. program was successful in improving the attendance of these low-achieving students, suggesting that a greater effort needs to be made in the area of remediation, which is not directly under the aegis of the A.I.D.P. program.

The strongest components of the elementary school A.I.D.P. program were the attendance outreach and guidance components. In spite of staffing delays, the A.I.D.P. teams made an enormous number of outreach and guidance contacts. Furthermore, the A.I.D.P. teams reached a large proportion of A.I.D.P. parents through phone calls, home visits, parent conferences, and/or parent guidance sessions. The facilitation, health, school-level linkage, and extended school day components varied in terms of how well they were implemented. This appeared to be primarily a function of whether, and in what manner, the facilitator received training in the implementation of these services.

Though A.I.D.P. staff members, principals, and OREA evaluators have recommendations for program improvement, the A.I.D.P. program is clearly well suited to an elementary school population. The A.I.D.P. staff feel that they are making a difference in the lives of the children they serve--a belief which is supported by statistical data. Serious consideration should be given to funding the elementary school A.I.D.P. program with a separate budget that would enable more elementary schools to have A.I.D.P. programs, and to implement them in the fall.

Other recommendations include the following:

- Provide appropriate and timely training for facilitators and family assistants in areas including, but not limited to, parent guidance, techniques for engaging increasing parent participation, and working with resistant parents.
- Provide funding for an additional family assistant position. Family assistants often make home visits in dangerous areas of the city. They should be able to work in teams for reasons of personal safety.
- Provide funding for a full-time facilitator and full-time guidance counselor. The guidelines for the guidance component of the program are substantial and, given the at-risk status of the A.I.D.P. program population, a full-time guidance position is in order. Similarly, a facilitator who has teaching responsibilities is often unavailable to assist students and parents.
- Revise the health component guidelines to take into account the fact that schools vary significantly in terms of the health services they offer. If A.I.D.P. staff members are to review health records, appropriate guidelines and training should address this task;
- Provide remedial education services to those elementary school A.I.D.P. program students who are experiencing chronic academic difficulties as manifested by low achievement scores and recurring subject failures. While

all five schools had school-wide policies regarding remedial education services, these policies do not appear to be meeting the needs of low-achieving A.I.D.P. program students, despite their increased attendance.

- Make funding for an extended school day component run under the auspices of the A.I.D.P. program mandatory, rather than optional.

- Make eligibility criteria more flexible. Many program staff noted that they could reach parents of elementary school-age children even when the child had been out of school for more days than the guidelines allowed. Furthermore, there are at-risk students who have not yet developed poor attendance, for whom participation in the A.I.D.P. program would be a preventive measure.

- Reimburse schools in a timely way for money spent on A.I.D.P. program materials, incentives, and trips.

Finally, one facilitator made a suggestion that bears consideration as a seventh A.I.D.P. program component. Noting that "where there are at-risk children there are at-risk parents," this facilitator felt that a parent education component including English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) classes, General Education Development (G.E.D.) classes, and occupational training activities would further increase the likelihood that elementary school students would continue to attend school.